(b) A number of programmes relating to freedom movement in national and regional network have been planned in various formats like serials, documentaries, telefilms, features, songs and short films etc.

(c) The languages are Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu besides English and Hindi.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Menace of Touts

128. SHRI SOHANVEER SINGH :
SHRI HARIVANSH SAHAI :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the menace of touts and unauthorised travel agents dealing with the reservation of railway tickets throughout the country which has become a problem to the public;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the railway officials also join hands with the touts for extraneous benefits as has been revealed by senior railway officials in the newspaper;

(d) if so, the number of raids conducted in each zone during the last one year and the current year till date and action taken against the guilty officials;

(e) whether the Government are aware that present provisions are not adequate to deter the touts;

(f) if so, whetehr the Government propose to constitute a committee and amend the Railway Act to make the trial of touts and selling of railway tickets more effectively;

(g) if so, the details thereof;

(h) whether a notice was issued by the Delhi High Court to his Ministry in this regard; and

(i) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (d) Some cases of cornering of train accommodation by anti-social elements and later selling it on premium to needy passengers have been reported.

In order to check this menance, regular checks are conducted to nab the touts and unauthorised Travel Agents by RPF, Vigilance and Commercial Departments in the Railways.

Checks are also conducted on the premises of authorised rail travel agents to see if any irregularities are committed by them. These raids and checks are intensified during summer rush.

In 1996, 3245 raids were conducted against touts and this year upto June, 1567 checks have already been conducted. As a result of the above checks, 3006 touts and anti-social elements have been detected and various actions against them like fining, prosecution, forfeiting of tickets, etc. have been taken. In some instances, licences of various RTSAs have also been suspended/cancelled. Apart from this, the passengers who have purchased tickets from unauthorised agents are also checked on trains and 6889 cases of transferred tickets have been caught during the year 1996 and June, 1997. During 1994-95, and 1995-96, 2407 and 2252 railway staff respectively have also been taken up for various irregularities including complaints in booking/reservation.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) to (i) Ministry of Railways has appointed a Committee, to go into all aspects of Passenger Reservation System, which is expected to submit its report shortly. There is a Public Interest Litigation in Delhi High Court against the Railways in regard to various issues relating to Passenger Reservation System, menace of touts etc.

[English]

Supply of Rails by SAIL

129. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether about 32,000 tonnes of rails supplied to Railways by Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) were found cracked;

(b) if so, the details of the annual supply of rails by SAIL to Railways;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted to ascertain the reason for the defects in the rails supplied to Railways;

(d) if so, details thereof; and

(e) the action being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) About 47,000 pieces of rails were supplied to the Railways at 14 destination points from 1st to 28th January, 1997, 1997. Out of these, only 26 pieces of rail were reported to have cracked and that too mostly in one consignment at Kalyan Flash Butt Welding Plant. Pending further enquiry/investigation into the cause of this isolated instance of rail breakage, Railways took a decision not to use the entire consignment of rails sent to them from 1st to 28th January, 1997.

(b) SAIL supplied 4.07 lakh tonnes of rails to Railways at different destinations in 1996-97.

(c) to (e) A detailed investigation was conducted along with the Railways. This investigation revealed that the bulk of the rails supplied during the month of January were processed through the existing straightening machine. Out of the small portion that was processed through the new bi-planner straightening machine, it appears that a few rails were perhaps inadvertently over stressed during trial run of the machine on 18th and 19th January, 1997. This over stressing coupled with multiple handling during loading, unloading and transportation caused the crack to develop and be visible only after the rails reached the destination point and were being processed for use. Operation of the new machine was temporarily suspended and a thorough technological evaluation was conducted along with the Railways to determine safe operating regime for this machine. After obtaining clearance from the Railways, operation of the machine has been resumed. Also action has been initiated jointly with the Railways to release the held-up rails and deploy them for service. This issue was examined in the Ministry in consultation with SAIL and the Railways. A time bound, point-wise, action plan was decided upon for remedying this situation.

[Translation]

Losses by SEBs

130. SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH :
SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA :

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) the details of losses suffered by the State Electricity Boards during 1995-96 and 1996-97, State-wise;

(b) the reasons for these losses;

(c) whether the Government have suggested privatisation of various works of power generation and distribution to the State Electricity Boards; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) In terms of the provisions of sub-Section of Section 69 of the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948, the accounts of State Electricity Boards are required to be forwarded to the Central Electricity Authority within six months of the close of the year to which the accounts relate. Accounts for all the SEBs for the year 1996-97 are not readily available with the CEA. However, a *Statement* showing the surplus/deficit of the SEBs, after taking into account the rural electrification subsidy as also without RE subsidy as provided in the account for the years 1994-95 and 1995-96 is enclosed.

(b) The reasons for the losses of the SEBs inter-alia include unremunerative tariffs, including agricultural tariffs, high T and D losses, low levels of Plant Load Factor (PLF) and consequently High fuel consumption in some Thermal Power Stations (TPSs), etc.

(c) and (d) Private Sector Companies have been permitted to set up power generating stations since 1991. The Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power finalised in December, 1996 mentions that the State Governments agree to a gradual programme of private sector participation in distribution of electricity. The process of private participation shall be initially in one or two viable geographical areas covering both urban and rural areas in a State and the State may extend this to other parts of the state gradually.

Statement

Statement showing the surplus/deficit of the SEBs (taking into account RE Subsidy as provided in the accounts as also without RE subsidy) during the years 1994-95 and 1995-96.

(Rs. in crores)

S.No.	Name of the SEB	1994-95		1995-96	
		With RE Subsidy	Without RE Subsidy	With RE Subsidy	Without RE Subsidy
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1.	APSEB	87.24	-857.04	130.59	-1128.58 (A)
2.	ASEB	-241.26	-296.90	-261.36	-261.46 (P)
3.	BSEB	-80.32	-300.11	-27.52	-27.52 (U)
4.	GEB	105.94	-550.28	108.00	-1003.39 (A)
5.	HSEB	16.16	-98.92	78.21	-536.59 (A)
6.	HPSEB	18.56	17.67	35.58	35.53 (A)